

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This evening, we are continuing our study through the book of Daniel.

We are going to be on chapter eight tonight.

You might remember me telling you that the book of Daniel is divided in two halves.

Chapters 1-6 provides us with a historical account of Daniel and his three friends while they lived in captivity.

While the last seven chapters mostly deal with prophetic visions that were given to Daniel regarding events that were going to occur in the future and were going to greatly affect the Jews and the world as well.

So, tonight we are going to see the second vision that was given to Daniel.

Let's pray...

[Dan 8:1-27 NKJV] 1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared [to] me--to me, Daniel--after the one that appeared to me the first time.

The last time that we were here – when we did chapter seven three weeks ago, we had seen that God had given Daniel a vision of the four major empires that would rule the earth.

That vision occurred during the first year of the reign of Belshazzar – verse 1 of chapter seven points this out.

That vision involved four different beasts coming out of the sea – a lion, a bear, a leopard and there was another beast that was so different – it could not be associated with any animal.

And I pointed out that the four beasts were the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire and the Roman Empire.

It was a vision that was very similar to the one that was given to Nebuchadnezzar back in chapter two – the vision of the image with the head of gold and the arms and body of silver and the torso and thighs of bronze and the feet of bronze.

As we can see by verse 1, this vision in chapter eight is a new vision – and it is going to focus on two of the four empires.

The Medo-Persian Empire and the Greek Empire.

It is important to note that many of things that Daniel sees in this chapter – have already been fulfilled – just like God revealed to Daniel.

However, even though these events may be history to you and me they also foreshadow events that will occur before the Second Coming of Christ.

2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I [was] in Shushan, the citadel, which [is] in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.

Verse one already established when Daniel received the vision, while he was in Babylon under Belshazzar. However, in the vision, Daniel is physically transported not only to a different location – but to a different time.

Shushan was 215 miles from Babylon

It would eventually become the capital of the Persian empire

When Daniel receives this vision, the Persian empire was still small – it would be another 12 years before they invade Babylon.

And this is the place where Xerxes would build a royal palace one hundred years after Daniel.

If you ever read the book of Esther – this is the location where it took place.

3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns [were] high; but one [was] higher than the other, and the higher [one] came up last.

Gabriel gives us the interpretation of the ram down in verse 20. It was the kings of the Medes and the Persians.

In chapter seven, we were told in Daniel's first vision that the bear was raised up on one side – both the bear and the ram are the same empire.

The Medes and the Persians were partners but the Persians were the dominant ones.

4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor [was there any] that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

When Cyrus became king of Persia, he began to expand the Persian Empire in the exact way the vision was presented to Daniel.

West: Assyria, Babylonia, and Asia Minor

North: Armenia and the Caspian Sea region

South: Egypt and Ethiopia

They were unstoppable in their conquests... until God raised another empire.

5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat [had] a notable horn between his eyes.

The male goat as we will see in verse 21, is the Greek Empire

And the notable horn between the eyes is Alexander the Great.

I had you make a note where it says that the male goat went across the whole surface of the earth without touching the ground – because this indicates the great speed of the conquest.

In just 12 years, Alexander the Great conquered the world –

6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

Some of the greatest and fiercest battles that have been fought were between the Greeks and the Persians.

And the reason was that they hated each other.

8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

Alexander the Great dies at the age of 33 and because he didn't have any heirs, four of his generals divided the kingdom among themselves.

Cassander ruled over Macedonia and Greece (west)

Lysimachus ruled Thrace, Bithynia, and most of Asia Minor (north)

Seleucus took Syria and the lands to the east including Babylonia, Mesopotamia, and Israel. (east)

Ptolemy ruled Egypt and parts of Asia Minor (south).

Now, I believe that it is important to note that God was in control throughout this entire time.

There was a reason that He allowed the Greek to conquer the entire world – because one of the things that the Greeks did while they conquered the world was that they made the Greek language – the common language during the time.

9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious [Land].

Now, in chapter seven (7:8), we saw that there was a little horn. However, that horn came out of the fourth beast – the Roman Empire.

That horn speaks about the Antichrist.

This horn comes out of the beast that was supposed to represent the Greek empire.

They are not the same horn – although they do share similar characteristics.

This horn is no other than Antiochus Epiphanes.

And he was responsible for terrible persecution directed at the Jews.

10 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down [some] of the host and [some] of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.

Now, there is some debate whether the mention of hosts of heaven and a reference to stars here in verse 10 is a reference to angels??? I don't think so -

I believe that the mention of host of heaven / stars here refers to the Jews most likely the Jewish priests and Jewish leaders.

We must remember that in the scriptures, Abraham was promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in heaven (Gen.15:5; 22:17).

Joseph had a dream that the stars (his brothers) were bowing down to him (Gen.37:9).

So verse 10, is a reference to the terror that Antiochus Epiphanes caused among the Jews.

11 He even exalted [himself] as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily [sacrifices] were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.

The Prince of host is no other than God Himself.

[Psa 24:10 NKJV] 10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He [is] the King of glory. Selah

Antiochus Epiphanes made himself to be equal with God.

In fact, he even had the currency stamped stating that he was god manifested.

He was arrogant

He was blasphemous

He went into the temple, he kicked all the priests out, he built an altar to Zeus and he sacrificed pigs there.

If anyone has a Catholic Bible – all of this is recorded in the Book of Maccabees.

He sent letters to the people to stop observing the Sabbath and the other festivals / he ordered the people to stop circumcising their children and to forget the Torah. In fact he encouraged people to violate the commandments.

He ordered people to rebel against God.

Anyone who violated his orders would be put to death.

12 Because of transgression, an army was given over [to the horn] to oppose the daily [sacrifices]; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did [all this] and prospered.

Verse 12 is a sad verse.

You see the reason that God allowed this persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes was because of their own sin.

The reason that he prospered had nothing to do with how cruel he was – the reason that he prospered was that the people already had the mindset of rebellion to God when he took over.

So when he ordered them to rebel against God – most of them were like, ok – we will go along.

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and [another] holy one said to that certain [one] who was speaking, "How long [will] the vision [be, concerning] the daily [sacrifices] and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?" 14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

Daniel in his vision here – hears a conversation among angels. They are discussing how long the persecution by this little horn was going to last.

How long was the temple going to continue to be used to offer sacrifices to false gods?

And one of them answered 2300 days.

The Jewish calendar is 360 days, this would bring the length to about 6.4 years.

This is about the time from when Antiochus began oppressing the Jews and replaced their high priest with his own fellow until the time that Judas Maccabaeus cleansed the Temple.

This vision was given to Daniel 350 years before it even happened.

There have been people who take this 2300 out of context and then they start to use this number to try to figure out the day that Jesus Christ is going to return.

For example, William Miller thought this meant 2300 years, and starting from 457 BC (don't know why) and figured that Christ would return in 1843. When it didn't happen, he recalculated and said it would happen in 1844. When that didn't happen, a lady named Ellen G. White came along and said that Jesus really did come in 1844 but only those on the inside knew about it.

Church - this was the start of the Seventh Day Adventists.

15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between [the banks of] the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this [man] understand the vision." 17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision [refers] to the time of the end." 18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the

ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. 19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you **what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation**; for at the appointed time the end [shall be].

From verse 15-19, we see the vision interpreted by Gabriel the angel.

And there are some people who will say – wait a minute, Gabriel said that this was in reference to the end times – how could it be that this was already fulfilled during a time 100 years before Christ was born.

The answer is that though this prophecy was fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes, it also has a later fulfillment in the Antichrist, referring to the time of the end.

Antiochus Epiphanes is sometimes called the “Antichrist of the Old Testament.” He prefigures the Antichrist of the end times.

Just as Antiochus Epiphanes rose to power with force and intrigue, so will the Antichrist.

As he persecuted the Jews, so will the Antichrist.

As he stopped sacrifice and desecrated the temple, so will the Antichrist.

As he seemed to be a complete success, so will the Antichrist.

“From what Antiochus did to Jews in his day, therefore, one may know the general pattern of what the Antichrist will do to them in the future.”

20 "The ram which you saw, having the two horns--[they are] the kings of Media and Persia. 21 "And the male goat [is] the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that [is] between its eyes [is] the first king. 22 "As for the broken [horn] and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.

Here in verse 23, we have a few of the characteristics that both Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist shared.

Fierce features are in reference to the brutality that was displayed by Antiochus Epiphanes as well as the brutality that the Antichrist is going to display.

Who understands sinister schemes is in reference to the fact that they were destined to do evil.

They will deceive the nation into thinking that they are doing good.

One of the scriptures we are going to study next week makes note of that –

Turn with me to Dan 9:27

[Dan 9:27 NKJV] 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

The Antichrist is going to be cunning in his speech and is going to make a covenant with Israel at the beginning of the tribulation period.

24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and [also] the holy people.

Both Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist will get their power through Satan – Both of them will be destructive in their reign and both of them will persecute the holy people.

Antiochus Epiphanes not only destroyed his enemies, but also harshly persecuted the people of God – remember the edict that he sent out that anyone who was caught following the Laws of Moses was going to be put to death. The coming Antichrist will also destroy and persecute those that do not accept the mark of the beast.

25 "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt [himself] in his heart. He shall destroy many in [their] prosperity. He

shall even rise against the Prince of princes; **But he shall be broken without [human] means.**

Antiochus thumbed his nose at God when he offered up pigs to Zeus in the temple.

The Antichrist will thumb his nose at God by gathering the armies of the world in the valley of Meggido in order to fight against Jesus.

I asked you to make a note that he shall be broken without human means.

Judas Maccabeus led the Jewish armies in revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes, but it was God that gave them the victory.

When Jesus returns, He will be the one that takes care of the antichrist.

Turn with me to Rev 19,

[Rev 19:11-16 NKJV] 11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse.

And He who sat on him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes [were] like a flame of fire, and on His head

[were] many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13

He [was] clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word

of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,

followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that

with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of

iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty

God. 16 And He has on [His] robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

The saints that are following Jesus – they are just there to watch Jesus take care of business.

26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For [it refers] to many days [in the future]." 27 And I, Daniel, **fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.**

When Daniel received the interpretation from Gabriel, he was sick.

He was sick because he knew the persecution that the Jews were still going to have to endure.

I know many people that are interested in prophesy but they are interested in prophesy for the wrong reasons.

Many people are only interested because it amazes them of the things that will occur or because they want to spend time trying to figure out how all the pieces fit.

Prophesy is supposed to move us to warn others of what is going to happen but also it is supposed to comfort us.

How is it supposed to comfort us?

Because the God that looked after His rebellious children in 500 bc, is the same God that will look after His rebellious children today.

He has given us a pattern so that we may be warned that what is written in chapters like these – it will be fulfilled.

Amen.

Let's pray...

